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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 IRAN RPO DUBAI 000055

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SUBJECT: EX-IRGC GENERAL CLAIMS IRGC IMPLEMENTS ORDERS, DOESN'T MAKE
POLICY

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CLASSIFIED BY: Jillian L Burns, Director, Iran Regional Presence
Office, Dubai, US Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

1.(S/NF) Summary: A purported former IRGC general told IRPO
Director that in his view, listing the IRGC as a terrorist
organization would end any chance of cooperation in Iraq, as
well as alienate many in Iran at a time of growing support for
US-Iran rapprochement. He claimed the IRGC carries out orders;
it doesn't write them. He maintained that the only way to have
effective negotiations with Iran was to do them in secret, in
order to minimize the chance that those opposed could sabotage
them. His views of a variety of Iranian issues are also noted.
End summary

IRGC listing

2.(S/NF) A purported former IRGC general told IRPO Director
August 23 that in his view, listing the IRGC on a terrorism list
would end all possibility of cooperation in Iraq. There are
ex-IRGC throughout government, he said, who would take such a
move as a personal affront. He said that in any case, IRGC does
not decide its actions; it only follows orders.

3.(S/NF) When told of concerns that the IRGC is using its
growing profits from its business activities to fund terrorism
and acquisition of WMD, he claimed that these are not black
accounts. He said the IRGC has to account to the Supreme Leader
for its economic activities and cannot spend these profits
independently.

US-Iran relations

4.(S/NF) The former general maintained - as he has in previous
meetings - that the only way to make progress between Iran and
the US is secret negotiations between people very close to the
leadership on both sides. He said in Iran today, there are a
few powerful people, such as Habibollah Asgaroladi, the head of
the Islamic Coalition Party, who are trying to fight the growing
support in the country for rebuilding relations with the US. He
said they are directing Iran's aggressive policies, including
interference in Iraq. Complicating the situation further, he

maintained, many countries stand to lose if the US and Iran reconcile and are also trying to prevent such an occurrence. In his view, secret negotiations were the only way to prevent all these actors from torpedoing the process.

Assembly of Experts

5.(S/NF) If Rafsanjani becomes the new head of the Assembly of Experts, in the general's view, he could have the clout to reorient Iran's policies. However, it is not certain Rafsanjani will get the position as the Supreme Leader is opposed. The general did not expect significant policy changes if anyone else is selected. Judiciary head Shahrudi is a good person, he said, very well educated and open-minded, but does not have the power base to influence policy.

Ahmadinejad

6.(S/NF) The general maintained that the president is losing popularity but at the same time, gaining ability to exert himself over the economy, as evidenced by the recent departures of the ministers of oil and of industry, as well as the head of Central Bank. Nonetheless, the source did not expect a major change - either positively or negatively - to the economy. He added that few within the IRGC support Ahmadinejad.

Unrest in the provinces

7.(S/NF) Asked his view of the situation in Sistan-va Baluchistan, he accused the Saudis of sending in money and creating problems. He said Baluchis are Salafi Sunnis, which he called the most anti-Shia of all. (By contrast, he said Wahabism was created by the British.) Asked if IRGC are involved at all in the drug trade there, he said no. He claimed these rumors start because members of Sepah go undercover to break up smuggling rings.

8.(S/NF) The general claimed the situation in Kurdistan was relatively stable there, and said that unlike in Turkey, Iranian

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Kurds are well assimilated into Iranian society.

ICRO

9.(S/NF) The former general said he used to work at the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) about eight years ago, and his brother used to be the deputy there. Technically ICRO falls under the Ministry of Ershad, he said, but in actuality, it reports directly to the Supreme Leader. Its charge is to promote both Iranian and Islamic culture. Its responsibilities include overseeing the cultural attachi program in embassies (the division where he worked), as well as engaging in interfaith dialogue. He commented that former chairman Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri is quite open-minded. Asked about the announcements in the past about recruiting suicide bombers in Iran, he was dismissive of the reports and claimed that in fact the effort was to recruit volunteers to fight Israel, not suicide bombers.

UAE

10.(S/NF) Asked about Sunni-Shia relations in the UAE, he said there are no problems in Dubai, where he spends a good deal of time. He said the situation was not as harmonious in Sharjah or Abu Dhabi, though, but did not offer examples. He claimed that Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid speaks Farsi and had studied in Iran prior to the revolution, where the Shah gave him military training.

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